



# Fact Sheet

SC Department of Health and Environmental Control • 2600 Bull Street • [www.scdhec.net](http://www.scdhec.net) • Promoting and protecting the health of the public and the environment.

## POTASSIUM IODIDE (KI)

### **Do Not Take KI Unless Public Health Officials Tell You To Take It Following a Radioactive Release.**

### **Store KI In A Dry Place At Room Temperature Until Directed To Take It.**

If a radioactive release occurs, State Emergency Management officials will give an order to evacuate. Evacuation directs people to leave the area to prevent exposures to radiation. Evacuation is the most effective protective measure after a release of radiation.

#### **What is Potassium Iodide?**

Potassium Iodide, also called KI, is a salt that can be used to protect against certain radiation exposures. **KI is not a substitute for evacuation.** In the case of a release of radiation at a nuclear plant, large amounts of radioactive iodine could be put into the air affecting the health of exposed people. For people who cannot leave the area, KI can be taken to protect the thyroid gland. The thyroid is a gland in the neck that uses forms of iodine to help the body work.

#### **What may happen following radiation release from a nuclear plant?**

Following a release of radiation from a nuclear plant, large amounts of radioactive iodine could be put into the air. Radioactive iodine can enter the body if it is breathed in from the air, or if food with radioactive iodine in it is eaten. Large amounts of radioactive iodine can hurt your thyroid gland, or even cause thyroid cancer later on. Radiation exposure can also cause other effects to your health. This is why evacuation is the best action to protect your health. If taken in time and at the correct dosage, the KI pill will protect your thyroid gland from being harmed. **KI does not protect you from any other problems that can come from being exposed to radiation.**

#### **What actions should you take following a release of radiation?**

If an evacuation is ordered and you cannot leave the area, stay indoors. Local or State Emergency Management officials will make announcements using the Emergency Alert System, television, radio stations, etc. giving information about protection and when to take your dosage of KI.

## Who should NOT take KI?

- People who have allergies to iodine, x-ray dye, and shellfish such as shrimp, oysters and crab.
- People who have the following medical conditions:
  1. *Multinodular Goiter*
  2. *Autoimmune Thyroiditis*
  3. *Dermatitis Herpetiformis*
  4. *Hypocomplementemic Vasculitis*
  5. *Graves Disease*
  6. *Urticaria Vasculitis*
  7. *Hyperthyroidism.*
- People who are unsure if they can take KI should consult their physician.

## How should KI be taken?

One dose of KI is helpful for about 24 hours. Take only one dose of KI for each 24-hour period that you are not able to leave the area. Public health officials will give regular information about how to take KI if it is needed.

People over 18 years of age or adolescents who weigh more than 150 pounds should take one whole pill. The pill must be cut into smaller pieces for those under the age of 18 or who weigh less than 150 pounds.

To divide the tablets use a pill cutter or knife on a hard surface. For infants and small children, crush the correct size piece of the pill for the child's age into a powder and mix with applesauce, pudding, or something else that the child likes.

Pregnant women, women who are breastfeeding, and newborns up to 1 month old should only take one dose of KI and contact their physician for follow-up.

The Federal Drug Administration (FDA) is the federal agency responsible for determining the correct amount of KI that should be taken. Doses recommended by the FDA are in the table below.

## Recommended Doses of KI...

<u>Age Group</u>	<u>KI Dosage</u>	<u>Amount of 130mg Tablets</u>	<u>Tablets</u>
Adults Adolescents (over 150 lbs.)	130mg	<b>1</b>	<b>1 tablet</b> 
Children 3-18 yrs (under 150 lbs.)	65mg	<b>1/2</b>	<b>1/2</b> 
Infants, 1 month to 3 yrs	32g	<b>1/4</b>	<b>1/4</b> 
Infants, Birth to 1 month	16mg	<b>1/8</b>	<b>1/8</b> 

\*Adolescents approaching adult size (150 pounds) should receive the full tablet (130mg).

**KI tablets should be stored at room temperature, out of the reach of children.**

**If you are not sure what to do, please call your local county health department or the Nuclear Response and Emergency Environmental Section, at 1-800-476-9677.**

**REMEMBER...**

**KI is not a substitute for Evacuation.**

**Do Not Take KI Unless Public Health Officials Tell You To Take It.**